

paddock near Tetrodon Loop (Dirk Hartog I.) on two days. This species has not been seen on the island since 1927.

Crimson Chat, *E. tricolor*. One bird was seen near H.S. on Peron Peninsula. (Second record for peninsula).

Orange Chat, *E. aurifrons*. Group of 4-5 birds fed in paddocks adjacent to H.S. on Peron Peninsula. (First record for Shark Bay area).

Red-capped Robin, *Petroica goodenovii*. Rare. Two brown-plumaged birds were seen in a paddock near Tetrodon Loop, Dirk Hartog I., and one male was seen in the yards at the H.S. This is only the third record for Dirk Hartog I.

Western Warbler, *Gerygone fusca*. One bird was mist-netted, banded and released near H.S. on Peron Peninsula. It was not heard to sing. This is the first record for Shark Bay area.

Silvereye, *Zosterops gouldi*. Status uncertain on Bernier I., but probably resident. Rare. About ten birds were seen in *Diplolaena*: tall *Acacia coriacea* thickets near centre of island W of Wedge Roek anchorage (cf. discussion on status by Mees, 1962: 110).

Little Crow, *Corvus bennetti*. This species occurs in small numbers (maximum number seen together was four) on Bernier I. Mees (1962: 111) was not able to determine the species of *Corvus* observed by him on the island.

I thank the following for permission to work on their property: Stuart and Liz Rocchi, Peron Peninsula H.S., Sir Thomas Wardle, Dirk Hartog I. H.S. Mr. B. K. Bowen, Director of Department of Fisheries and Wildlife kindly arranged my transport to and from Bernier I. The Western Australian Wildlife Authority granted permits to work on Bernier and Dirk Hartog Islands. Field expenses were met by a grant from the Australian Research Grants Committee.

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FURTHER NOTES ON BIRDS OF BENGER SWAMP

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Since the publication of "Birds of Benger Swamp", *W.Aust. Nat.*, 12, 1973: 147-155, I have maintained a programme of observations which has confirmed my conclusions relating to the seasonal occurrence of the commoner water-frequenting birds. The table appearing on p. 149 was based on over 3,000 observations. An additional 1,400 observations provide no grounds for amendment.

LIST OF SPECIES

Predictably a number of additions have been made to the list of species occurring in the area. These are:

Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*. See *W. Aust. Nat.*, 13, 1975: 62 for a note on the occurrence of this species in late 1973. My only other record is for December 25, 1975, when I located one bird in close proximity to White-faced Herons and Straw-necked Ibis. Two long, fine head plumes were noted.

Royal Spoonbill, *Platalea regia*. Two were identified on November 24, 1975 and one bird observed on December 4 and on December 11, but none on later visits. At least one of these birds had a well-developed crest.

Stubble Quail, *Coturnix pectoralis*. When I first flushed quail in the Swamp, I postulated "? Brown Quail" on the basis of habitat and it was not until December 29, 1971 that I heard calls of Stubble Quail from

a then dry portion of the Swamp and from adjacent paddocks. This is the only quail specifically identified at the Swamp.

Spotted Crane, *Porzana fluminea*. My only record of this species was made on November 8, 1976, when I was able to observe a single bird feeding by a pool on a *Typha* lined track.

Spotless Crane, *P. tabuensis*. This species was not satisfactorily identified in the Swamp until October, 1974, though it appears to be reasonably frequent in the general area.

Common Sandpiper, *Tringa hypoleucos*. One bird was seen on several occasions by members of a W.A. Naturalists' Club excursion on November 9, 1975. My only other record is of one bird on the handrail of the bridge at the approach to the Swamp, on November 24, 1975.

Marsh Sandpiper, *T. stagnatalis*. On October 13, 1976, I flushed a wader from a roadside. It flew to a distance of c. 35 m, alighted on the water, and swam freely to a grassy shallow, where it remained briefly before wading and swimming to a similar area a few metres away. I was able to obtain a fairly full description and identified the bird as this species. However, on December 17, 1976, I encountered one bird with Greenshanks and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers under ideal viewing conditions. In size it was comparable with the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, but in form, stance and style it was very like the Greenshanks, though more active. Noted: White on face, underparts, rump and adjacent areas. Legs, ? green-grey—not black, nor definitely yellow.

Black-tailed Godwit, *Limosa limosa*. On December 11, 1974, I saw two godwits feeding in shallow water with Greenshanks. I approached the birds to c. 80 m before both species flew and, without separating, returned to the same place. The terminal part of the godwits' tails appeared black, contrasting sharply with white upper tail and rump. A fairly distinct white band on the wing was noted. Eventually I flushed the birds again, confirming these diagnostic features. This appears to be a slight extension of recorded range.

Oriental Pratincole, *Glareola maldivarum*. Located on November 15, 1976 by Messrs. I. Edgar and J. Bunn, who kindly informed me of their discovery. I proceeded to Benger and found the bird without difficulty and confirmed the identification. However, by that time the light was indifferent so I returned the following morning, when observing conditions were ideal, and made a detailed description.

White-winged Triller, *Lalage sueurii*. Cock bird encountered in *Mela-leuca* on December 11, 1975.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill, *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*. Two noted in *Mela-leuca* on December 11, 1975 and one bird in the same locality on December 31, 1976.

White-fronted Chat, *Ephthianura albifrons*. On December 25, 1975, I located a pair in the Swamp. The shallower pools were dry and cultivation had been commenced in a few places. The birds were present in a cultivated area of c. 0.2 ha. Neither this nor the preceding species is frequent in this part of the clay zone.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON CERTAIN SPECIES PREVIOUSLY RECORDED

White-necked Heron, *Ardea pacifica*. None recorded in 1974, but 1975 was an invasion year and birds were present at Benger from September 22, when one bird was seen, until the drying out of the Swamp. An estimated 20 birds were scattered through the Swamp from early October. A similar pattern occurred in 1976 when one bird was seen on October 31, and thereafter 20 or more were present.

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*. I have two additional records of single birds—on December 19, 1973 and December 25, 1975; the latter was apparently immature—a dark legged bird.

Glossy Ibis, *Plegadis falcinellus*. One additional record—a single bird on December 25, 1975.

White Ibis, *Threskiornis molucca*. The steady increase in number of this species detailed in my earlier account has continued. In 1973, the birds were late appearing; c. 25 were seen on November 1 and thereafter

no big counts were made because the birds showed less tendency to flock than in the preceding years. In 1974, one bird was noted on September 2 and thereafter scattered individuals and groups were present until January 10, 1975 when at least 35 were recorded. The species reappeared on October 7, 1975 when four birds were present. This was another season of scattered groups with numbers hard to assess. In 1976, three birds were noted on September 1. Numbers started to build up in October and towards the end of the season a tendency to flock was apparent. On October 31, 72 birds were counted feeding in one area. I estimated 100 birds to be present in the Swamp. On January 6, 1976 I counted 71 birds in the same area and a later recount gave a total of 80+. Again no immature birds have been seen.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill, *Platalea flavipes*. During December 1973 I saw two birds on each of three occasions. 1974—nil. 1975—two birds on December 25 and two and perhaps a third, on December 29. 1976—three on December 7 and one on December 17.

Whistling Kite, *Haliastur sphenurus*. Usually two birds appear to be present, but at the drying out of the Swamp the number is augmented, and up to nine birds have been seen together. This might be explained by: (1) Presence of young of the year. (2) The fall of the Swamp level providing improved food supply. (3) The activity of shooters providing food for scavengers. The presence of six birds on June 5, 1974 (when the Swamp level was still low) may tend to discount (1).

Black-tailed Native-hen, *Gallinula ventralis*. My only additional records have been for 1975 which appears to have been a moderate invasion year. At Benger I saw seven on December 11 and four on December 18.

Coot, *Fulica atra*. I have a strong impression that over the past four years the number of Coot appearing at Benger has been low. Records of Coot in any number are restricted to October and November, mainly the latter month. This pattern may have been due to good seasons providing favourable conditions elsewhere.

ADDITIONS TO FAUNA OTHER THAN BIRDS

Western Water-rat, *Hydromys fuliginosus*. One, dead, found on a track by member of the W.A. Naturalists' Club excursion on November 9, 1975.

CONSERVATION

The future of Benger Swamp now appears to be assured. The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is acquiring blocks in the Swamp and now has a controlling interest. An imaginative comprehensive management plan is being developed.

VEGETATION

With the interest now being focussed on the Swamp I have abandoned an intention of adding to the previous notes on vegetation in the hope that one of our specialists will provide a detailed treatment. However, the following corrections are desirable: the *Typha* is *T. orientalis*, not *angustifolia* and the common *Lemna* is *L. oligorrhiza*.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Mediterranean Snail (*Theba pisana*) on Rottnest Island.—Dr. D. L. Serventy outlined the history of the spread of the Mediterranean snail on Rottnest in the *W.A. Naturalist* (2 (2), 1949). These snails were very much in evidence and a familiar sight as they clung to the vegetation in clusters. A favourite resting place was the vertical flowering stems of the introduced plant *Asphodelus fistulosus* which had become established along the roads and tracks traversing the Island.